

Moderators' Report/
Principal Moderator Feedback

Summer 2014

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Spanish (5SP02/2A)
Paper 2A: Speaking in Spanish

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GCSE Spanish
Unit 2 Speaking in Spanish
Moderator Report

Both candidates and their Teacher-Examiners had prepared well for the oral tests this summer and most of the marking by the Centres was accurate and, where appropriate, had been carefully standardized. The Teacher-Examiners were supportive and encouraging in their conduct of the tests and were generally careful to ask questions that enabled the candidates to expand on their answers and demonstrate their abilities over a wide range of tenses, structures and vocabulary. It was pleasing to observe that some questioning led to the production of complex language, opinions and justification. However, the worrying trend that was reported on last year is still prevalent and a number of centres are relying on pre-learnt questions and answers during the interaction with the Teacher-Examiner rather than providing a genuine opportunity for spontaneity. It was particularly disconcerting during an interaction with the teacher examiner to hear one candidate ask 'Which question was that, Miss?', clearly giving the impression that a whole sequence of questions and answers had been pre-learnt.

Some Teacher-Examiners are still dependent on a bank of questions, often the same questions asked of each candidate in the centre, without listening to what the candidates are saying and trying to develop a natural conversation rather than a question and answer session. It should be noted that absence of spontaneity can prevent a candidate from accessing the top marks for Content and Response, where one of the descriptors makes it quite clear that moderators are listening for evidence of a candidate who *'Speaks very confidently and with clear spontaneity'*. The most popular task type this year was the Presentation, followed by the Picture Based Discussion and with fewer candidates and centres opting for the Open Interaction. Of the themes, School was once again very popular as a centre-devised option whilst Travel and Tourism and Sport and Leisure both featured prominently as popular themes established by the board.

PRESENTATIONS

There were many examples of candidates taking a genuine interest in the topics they had chosen to present and they often delivered their opening presentations with confidence and fluency. A number of presentations focused on the theme of Holidays. Work Experience or Media and Leisure with plenty of information about sports personalities or pop stars. However, there was frequently a marked difference between the opening presentation, which often consisted of a pre-learnt monologue, and the subsequent interaction with the teacher examiner where the candidates rapidly became less confident in their linguistic abilities and consequently more hesitant and less forthcoming.

Centres are reminded that the opening presentations must last for a minimum of one minute and not extend beyond three minutes before the Teacher-Examiner interrupts to begin the interaction. The timing begins at the moment when a candidate produces the first sentence in the target

language; introductions and administrative details do not count towards the timing, which stops as soon as the Teacher-Examiner interrupts. If a presentation lasts for less than one minute, then 2 marks should be deducted automatically from Content and Response only, a marking principle that has been agreed across all the modern languages. If the opening presentation extends to the maximum three minutes, it is also important to ensure that adequate time is given to the following interaction to enable the candidates to demonstrate their spontaneity and fluency in natural conversation. An oral test lasting four minutes, three of which have been taken up with the opening presentation, is unlikely to give the candidates sufficient opportunity to access the higher marks. In a number of cases monologue Presentations were allowed to continue beyond three minutes, allowing less time for interaction. Too many Presentations were straightforward, pre-learnt monologues which were then extended into a question and answer session which should have been discussion and therefore spontaneous.

PICTURE BASED DISCUSSIONS

There was a noticeable increase in the number of centres choosing not to submit original or photocopied pictures while some failed to provide any description of the content of the picture on the CM2 form. The moderator needs to know some detailed information about the chosen picture as this has to be referred to during the test. Many candidates chose the topic of Holidays, Free Time or My Town and the pictures often led to a relaxed discussion in which candidates felt comfortable with familiar information. There were some good imaginative and interesting conversations in which candidates obviously enjoyed the opportunity to talk about issues in which they had a personal interest. Some more able and ambitious candidates chose pictures that demonstrated obesity, drugs, drinking or smoking and sustained intelligent discussions on social problems. Many Teacher-Examiners demonstrated good examining technique, using open ended questions and affording their candidates ample opportunity to show their competence over a range of tenses, structures and vocabulary. Candidates may choose to initiate the discussion on their chosen picture but there is no requirement for them to begin with a presentation and it is perfectly acceptable for the Teacher-Examiner to begin the test with a question that refers directly to the picture, for instance '*¿Quiénes son estas personas en la foto?*' or '*¿Dónde fue sacada esta foto?*'

OPEN INTERACTIONS

These were the least popular task types, although they often provide a more accessible opportunity for the weaker candidate. Several centres chose the topics of School Life, Work and Employment or the Tourist Office and provided their candidates with clear roles to play in the interactions. The Specification clearly indicates that candidates are expected to ask a question or questions during the Open Interaction and several centres are failing to make this clear on the stimuli given to the candidates. If a candidate is told to ask a question or questions and fails to do so during the test, 2 marks are automatically deducted from Content and Response only.

If the candidate is instructed to ask questions – plural – and only manages to ask one, then one mark is deducted. These marking principles have been agreed across all the modern languages. On occasion candidates fulfilled their brief in the stimulus by asking questions but this led to extended responses from the Teacher-Examiner which effectively took time away from the candidates. It is essential that Teacher-Examiners keep their input to a minimum while still maintaining the spirit of a good natured dialogue. The scenarios for Open Interactions should be chosen carefully as elements of negotiation or transaction are required. Too many Open Interactions were simply general and informal conversations and several of them simply followed the format of a Presentation with no evidence of negotiation or transaction. Teacher-Examiners sometimes did not provide any opportunity for unprepared responses from their candidates and it is not recommended to print a list of questions on the stimulus sheet and to put these to all the candidates in the same order. The best performances will show some evidence of candidates responding to unpredictable elements and high marks will not come from rehearsed responses to the Teacher-Examiner.

In all three task types there were examples of ambiguity caused by, for instance, the perennial confusion of *fui* / *fue*, and by poor pronunciation and intonation, especially as weaker candidates tried to read from their CA2 forms or sounded as though they were reading from prepared scripts. The most common difficulties arose with the pronunciation of the anglicized 'j' and 'g' as in '*trabajo*' and '*biología*', and the 'll' and 'q' consonants whilst '*que*' was frequently pronounced '*cu*'. Again '*hay*' was often mispronounced with the opening aspirate chiming with the English '*a*'.

ADMINISTRATION

Most administration this year was excellent with paperwork arriving on time and correctly completed, although in a few cases the CM2 forms were incomplete and direct requests had to be made to the centres concerned. Some centres sent a printout of the EDI in place of the Optems forms and problems arose because the EDI printout did not show which candidates had been selected for moderation. This led to unnecessary delays when clarification had to be requested directly from the centres. A few centres submitted the wrong Optems form with no indication of the asterisked candidates whilst others had submitted the marks for 2B to Edexcel Pearson rather than 2A and, once alerted, they had to contact the board to change them. This resulted in unnecessary delay and confusion. In a couple of instances centres did not send the work that matched the CM2 form – for example the track of an Open Interaction but a Presentation on another topic recorded on the CM2 - or occasionally made the mistake of entering marks on the Optems form that did not match the CM2 marks.

A significant minority of centres are sending all candidates' work, including the unmoderated 2B tasks instead of just the samples and recordings required for 2A. However, centres are now routinely including the Highest and Lowest scoring candidates in addition to the requested samples. Similarly, centres are now routinely sending a variety of task types in their samples as required by the board. It was very helpful to have clearly labelled track listings detailing candidates' names and numbers as well as

labels attached to the memory sticks. Most recordings were clear and well-timed although in a few cases a high level background hum made it difficult to hear what the candidate was saying. Similarly the position of the microphone should favour the candidate rather than the teacher examiner. It is important to check the quality and audibility of the recordings before submitting them to the moderator. A number of candidates decided not to use the CA2 form but there was no indication to that effect for the benefit of the moderator. If candidates do not use the CA2 forms then this should be clearly written on the form itself and sent with the corresponding sample or alternatively a covering note to explain why the CA2 forms are missing. In a few cases centres did not send the stimuli that had been given to the candidates and it is essential for the moderators to be aware of all the preparation materials used by the candidates. This includes the picture stimulus used for the picture based discussion or at least a clear description of the picture or photograph.

Timings of the tests were generally accurate although some tests were short of the minimum 4 minutes and others extended beyond the maximum 6 minutes. If tests are too short, an automatic 2 marks are deducted from Content and Response only, while moderators stop listening after 6 minutes when tests are too long. Again, these marking principles have been agreed across all the modern languages. Moderators try to explain discrepancies in marks through the E9 report forms and centres are encouraged to act on the advice given. For example a fully rehearsed oral test with perfect sentence construction and tense usage might allow the candidate to get high marks for Range of Language, but lack of intonation and poor pronunciation, which often occurs with rehearsed monologues, will inevitably affect the mark for Accuracy. Too many centres that prepare their students well allow long monologues for each and every answer and the absence of unpredictability and natural spontaneity tend to limit candidates' access to the highest marks for Content and Response. However, only a minority of centres presented problems of administration, conduct and assessment of the oral tests and the majority are to be congratulated on the efficiency of their paperwork, the professional manner in which they conducted the tests and the accuracy of their marking.

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